9/7/70

Dear Sylvia,

Mary was here this weekend. We enjoyed it and her very much. It was good for the three of us, very good.

We talked of many things and did little "work".

One thing does disturb me much, and I write you about that before I get snowed under again, which can happen tomorrow.

With this preface:

If anyone has cause to hate Dave Lifton and want something very bad to happen to him, I am that one. I don't think you can begin to conceive the evil of which he is capable, the magnitude of the really rotten campaigns of various kinds he waged against me, and how really insane he is and has been. If the sickness does not relieve the evil, it also is something of which those not so cursed can pretend they have no awareness.

I fear very much that whatever you may do, and if Mary knows or has any idea, she did not tell me, may really ruin him and I think it may also hurt you, for though you may tell yourself otherwise in the heat of indignation, you ultimately come to feel you were dominated by vindictiveness. And whatever you might seek to achieve by whatever you might do undoubtedly can be better accomplished by other means. Your divorcement from where the only work of which I have knowledge is being done - and it is you who effected the divorce - denies you knowledge. That, too, you would eventually learn. But need I tell you that ignorance will not justify error, especially when there need have been and now is not any reason for not knowing?

I do not think you can do anything that cannot ruin Dave, for he is very sick. Whether or not he can still be salvaged, I do not know. I have painful reason to know the extent of both his sickness and his perfidy. You really should not do anything to a sick man, whatever the motive now in your mind (and I cannot and do not believe you intend any but the best actions).

In arguing against your doing anything, at least until you make the effort you have so long avoided to learn what the realities are, I must remind you of the many times I tried to inform you and you would not listen. You had made your own mind up and would not consider anything. If this is not like you, it is what you did and less than what you did. Once when I told you something and told you I didn't want him to know, you immediately told him and he immediately bragged about it. It got back to me fairly soon. Now I knew of Dave what you had refused to consider, and I had reason, good reasons, for wanting him not to have that of which you told him and promptly got. I simply did not want it misused as I know he has misused the material of others (as well as his own). Other things - considered not susceptible of this misuse I permitted free access to. I have known all along that he has been selling this and other things for profit, but that did not impel me to cut him off from what I produced that he did not have. Remember the efforts I made to get you to know what there was to consider about Thornley (and is not Thornley, with you, also Dave?)? I asked of you only that you maintain my confidence. That you refused to do. You considered your own judgement beyond question, yet you knew nothing. You were then dominated by hate. We are all capable of that but we also should try and escape that kind of captivity. You hated Garrison so all his enemies were your friends. And when I tried to tell you things about Garrison in confidence, did you not also reject that? My purpose is not to guide you, but to try and get you to think, to escape the prison of

Please try and understand several things. I intend no insult. It is late at night and I have no time to compose circumlocutions. Also, I have to high a regard for you and your intelligence to use them. Sickness neither justifies nor excuses evil, but it does require that reaction to this evil be tempered, if expressed at all, and in the context of sickness, not normality. You and Mary alone were unaware that Dave is sick, and in your case, I know you should have suspected it long ago. I also suspect you allowed yourself to be flattered around it, for I know Dave's ways only too well. The papier-mache trees destroyed all innocence, and in the tough cases, the Brown and Root tunnels should have added more than sufficient. But it only began there. I do not know how long Mary has been in touch with Dave, so I have no basis for an opinion there. I am also concerned that you may be guilt-plagued if you do anything that you may even think sends him over that line already so thin. Here I am also concerned that such a thing might come to pass without you having any responsibility for it, yet under conditions that may make you think you are.

We all have much rethinking to do, especially those of us who have been inactive and are pretty much latched to the knowledge of the past. It is my own view that we are far from having restored any public credibility that others have cost us. I see nothing to be gained and everything to be lost by minor stories in minor journals. I hope Computers is a dirty word to you-but you provided something for it and to one you didn't trust several years ago. In my own case, I havemmade but a single exception. That was because I was destitute and it consists of nothing not already public.

There are ways in which we can recaputre this credibility. One is the course I have taken, and pretty much alone, through the courts. If you have read nothing of it, I have gotten a summary judgement against Justice and I have filed two more suits, with two additional ones prepared and awaiting revision. We will have a major victory in the Ray case if Bud's ego-tripping and bad judgement do not ruin this, and I do fear the possibility. I have done nothing to attract attention to these suits, not even holding a press conference. I think it better this way. In time, we'll get through.

In these matters, I am more worried by friends than by enemies, for the enemies have been helpful and the friends have not been. I fear all the cheap, self-seeking publicity and the abominable stories. In a sense, Sprague is worse than Skolnick.

You may be unwilling to believe it, but I tellyouxx and I am prepared to prove to you that a major part of my time for several years has been sheltering us from an wierd assortment of "friendly" disasters. There is no way I could afford them, no way I can recover their varied costs. Not one sprang from a bad intention, and not one was any less an imminent disaster thereby. In the time trying to save us from the consequences of Nichols' first suit required I could have written a book-and I have such a book researched and ready for the writing. I simply cannot continue doing this, and it is shameful that it was necessary. It is no credit to anyone. Please, I beg you, do not add to this with more than cannot be constructive, however you may conceive it.

I hope this is sufficiently clear. I must get to bed. Because I have involved Gary and Mary, I'll send them copies. If you communicate with them, they will know what I've said. I repeat, I do not intend this as and you should not take it as personal affront. I simply want to prevent more harm. If you doubt this, ask yourself what other purpose the time I've taken can serve.

Sincerely,

Harold